



NATIONAL TWIN LOSS SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Winter Edition
Editor: Lynne Schulz

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Editorial

Welcome to our first Winter edition of the NTLS newsletter. I hope that members who are receiving our newsletter are finding a useful, yet slightly different source of multiple birth loss information.



Mother's Day was only last month, and I hope that you managed to get through this time with the support of your family, friends, and most importantly,

your spouses. This is one such day where many memory triggers arise to smack us in the face when we least expect it, so it is important to be amongst those who are sensitive to your needs and emotions.

Don't forget that the NTLS website is there for you to utilise, and our Links Page provides many avenues to quite a number of useful bereavement care groups.

That's all from me for the moment.

Yours in bereavement care, Lynne Schulz.

.People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.

(Elizabeth Kubler Ross)

Founder Wins Award!



Founder of NTLS, Lynne Schulz was one of the winners in the short-listed category for the 2009 Australian

Centre for Leadership for Women Award.

Announced on International Women's Day in March, the prize included a nice cheque for \$660! Not a bad boost for this year's fundraising efforts.

This money will go towards republishing the second edition of Lynne's book, "The Diary" with our US Publisher Pleasant Word.

Project '08 Update

Although moving slowly, the occasional completed questionnaire is being returned., and new enquiries are being received.

Information gained from this research will be collated during 2010 and go towards the eventual publication of another multiple birth loss book, aimed at health care professionals and those who care for multiple birth loss families.

If you would like to support this project, it is still not too late to complete a questionnaire. Just send an email and ask.



What's in this edition?

- *Editorial*
- *Founder wins award!*
- *Project '08 Update*
- *Fundraising Update*
- *Article: A Mother's Pain*
- *Rebulding our site*
- *Meet our Support Workers!*





As a multiple birth loss mother I wish to share some general answers to questions that are often asked by those with enquiring minds.

What is the 'right' thing to say to a multiple birth loss parent?

Saying that things are 'alright' is not a good start. Reminding bereaved families that it's good that 'at least' they have some surviving children is not a positive way in trying to lessen their pain. In fact, it does the opposite and exacerbates the emotional pain by ignoring the child, (or children) who have died. It denies those who have died an identity and reveals the imbalance of how society treats older people who have died with more respect than those who were less fortunate and passed away at a much earlier age.

What is wrong with trying to focus on the living rather than the dead?

Surviving multiple birth children who have lost their siblings early in life, such as during the pregnancy or shortly after birth, seem to suffer the greatest trauma. They struggle to find their own identity within a mostly singleton world, feeling isolated, lost and alone without their 'wombmate'. Research has revealed that surviving twins for example, who were not told of their twinship found it hard to understand why they had difficulty in forming and maintaining long term relationships. It is not uncommon to hear stories of survivors turning to drugs and alcohol as a means of escape and many have required professional counselling or in extreme cases, psychiatric care.

Mothers who have been told to not tell their survivors the truth struggle to maintain a most painful secret. Living with a survivor, especially if the child is an identical twin, can be a constant daily reminder of their loss, and some mothers have been noted to have mistreated their surviving twins, blaming them for the unfortunate situation. Several years ago I worked with a medical professional in assisting a woman who tried to keep her 'secret' for many years. Eventually though, the 'secret' came out, albeit accidentally, during a family get-together. The mother did not receive any family support and was treated with contempt at having broken the cardinal rule of speaking the truth. This particular woman required intensive psychiatric care to firstly, work through the many years of pent-up grief, and secondly, assistance to communicate with her surviving twin so that the shock of the discovery could be dealt with without too many major ramifications.

Women can always have more babies. What's the problem with losing just one?

This is an extremely insensitive and hurtful comment. Babies are not commodities which can be purchased off the shelf like cereal in a supermarket! With a rapidly aging population, our society sees many women putting off childbearing until much later in life. This creates fertility problems and it is not uncommon for women in their forties to become reliant upon fertility drugs and IVF programmes. This alone adds to the increase in multiple births. Therefore after years of emotional and financial expense in trying to conceive a child, to be told to 'just go out and have another one', is not only cruel, but a very ignorant view of a most complex problem.

Women who bear children within a multiple pregnancy are often treated like a dog who has given birth to a litter of pups. Family, friends and health care professionals, in their feeble attempts to console the bereaved mother, try and explain that because there are still living children, it doesn't really matter if one has died. In answer to that I will often ask the parent who has several singleton children to go home and decide which one you would like to have 'put down'.

Therefore, it is acknowledged that maternal loss is a most devastating and tragic experience. It is also acknowledged that families who have a surviving child within a multiple pregnancy loss situation are blessed to have a survivor to love, care for and raise. Having said that, all multiple pregnancy loss families want is to be treated as fairly as their singleton counterparts, but to also remind those who care for them that multiple birth loss deals with life and death, and the short term experiences of these families will have long term ramifications for many years ahead. That's why education is so important. We need to equip these families and health care professionals in how to give our survivors hope of a positive and productive future.





Rebuilding our website

If you haven't visited the NTLS website in quite a while, why not make the time to do so and have a look at some of the changes. Most of the public-viewing pages are completed, however the members only section will take a bit longer. Our website is an important communication point and information access area, so please make use of it as much as possible.



Meet our Support Workers!



NTLS is proud to have OzMOST Founder Julie Bryant as its new Support Worker!

Julie is the Mother of a Surviving Twin, Thomas, and fully understands the unique needs that multiple birth loss families experience.

Julie and her team at OzMOST created the brilliant

booklets 'Multiple Loss Bereavement Care' for health care professionals and for parents.

She was also part of the team responsible for the creation of the successful Apex Australia Twin Loss Awareness Kit during 2002-2006.

Julie has almost completed her degree as a fully qualified Counsellor, and has several years experience in assisting bereaved parents through the work she does with OzMOST, which stands for Aussie Mothers of Surviving Twins.

OzMOST has been highly successful in providing an online support mechanism for multiple birth loss mothers for many years.

Welcome Julie! Great to have you on board our administration team!



NTLS is also extremely delighted to have Karen Jefferson of the Christchurch Multiple Birth Club in NZ on our team!

Karen has many years of experience in grief counselling and has certificates in Applied Grief Studies Training, Grief Support, and Basic Integrative Counselling Skills and

Personal Growth.

Besides all that she is completing a Diploma in Counselling and is a Committee member of NALAG in Canterbury, NZ.

The Christchurch Multiple Birth Club has been in operation for over 25 years and is a volunteer, non-profit group run by multiple birth parents to support their fellow multiple birth families.

Karen is a strong supporter of the work being done by NTLS so it is also with great pride that we say, "Welcome aboard the team, Karen!"

Both Julie and Karen's contact details can be found on the Support Worker page of the NTLS website, so if you feel you need somebody to talk to, either by phone or email, don't hesitate to contact one of these ladies.

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